

**DECISION OF THE DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL
LEGAL COUNCIL**

COMPLAINT NO234/2006

YVONNE E. CHAMBERS VS JONATHAN VERNON RICKETTS

PANEL:

**MR. ALLAN WOOD
MR. DAVID BATTS
MISS BERYL ENNIS**

HEARING DATE 8TH NOVEMBER, 2008

1. The attorney J. Vernon Ricketts (the Attorney) was retained by the Complainant in the year 2000 to remove the name of her deceased husband from the Certificates of Title in respect of land at Smithfield and Kingswood Pen, Westmoreland.
2. Subsequently the attorney Jonathan Vernon Ricketts was also retained to represent the Complainant with respect to sale of land at Kingswood Pen registered at Volume 506 Folio 39 for the sum of \$4.5. million.
3. In or about 2005 the sum of \$1 million was paid to the Attorney as the deposit while the sums amounting to \$3 million were paid directly to the Complainant, leaving a balance owing of \$500,000.00.
4. The Attorney failed to complete the transfer of the land at Kingswood Pen and failed to remove the name of the deceased husband from the title for Smithfield.
5. The Attorney subsequently advised the Complainant that the papers including the title were stolen from his car.
6. The Attorney has not accounted to the Complainant for the sum that he received \$1,000,000.00.

Having regard to the foregoing, the Attorney has breached Canon IV (r) & (s) of the Legal Profession Canons of Professional Ethics Rules as he has failed to deal with his client's business with due expedition and he has acted with inexcusable and deplorable negligence or neglect. Further, he has breached Canon VII (b) in that he failed to account to his client for money in his hands for the account or credit of the client.

The Attorney's conduct is discreditable to his profession in breach of Canon 1(b).

The Attorney has already been struck off for an unrelated matter but the Panel is of the view that a further Order to strike off is warranted.

It is accordingly ordered that:

1. The name of Jonathan Vernon Ricketts be struck off the Roll of Attorney-at-Law entitled to practise in the several courts of the Island of Jamaica.
2. By way of restitution the attorney Jonathan Vernon Ricketts is ordered to pay to the complainant the sum of \$1million.
3. Further, the attorney Jonathan Vernon Ricketts is ordered to pay a fine of \$200,000.00 to the General Legal Council.
4. The sum payable to the Complainant pursuant to the order numbered 2 hereof is to bear interest at the rate of 8% per annum from the 1st January, 2006 to the date of payment.
5. The Complainant is to be paid costs by the Attorney in the sum of \$10,000.00.


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MR. ALLAN WOOD


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MR. DAVID BATTIS


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MISS BERYL ENNIS

Dated 8th November, 2008